

Eastern Senior High School:

9th Grade Small Learning Community

May 2009



9th Grade Small Learning Community (SLC)

Why focus on 9th grade?

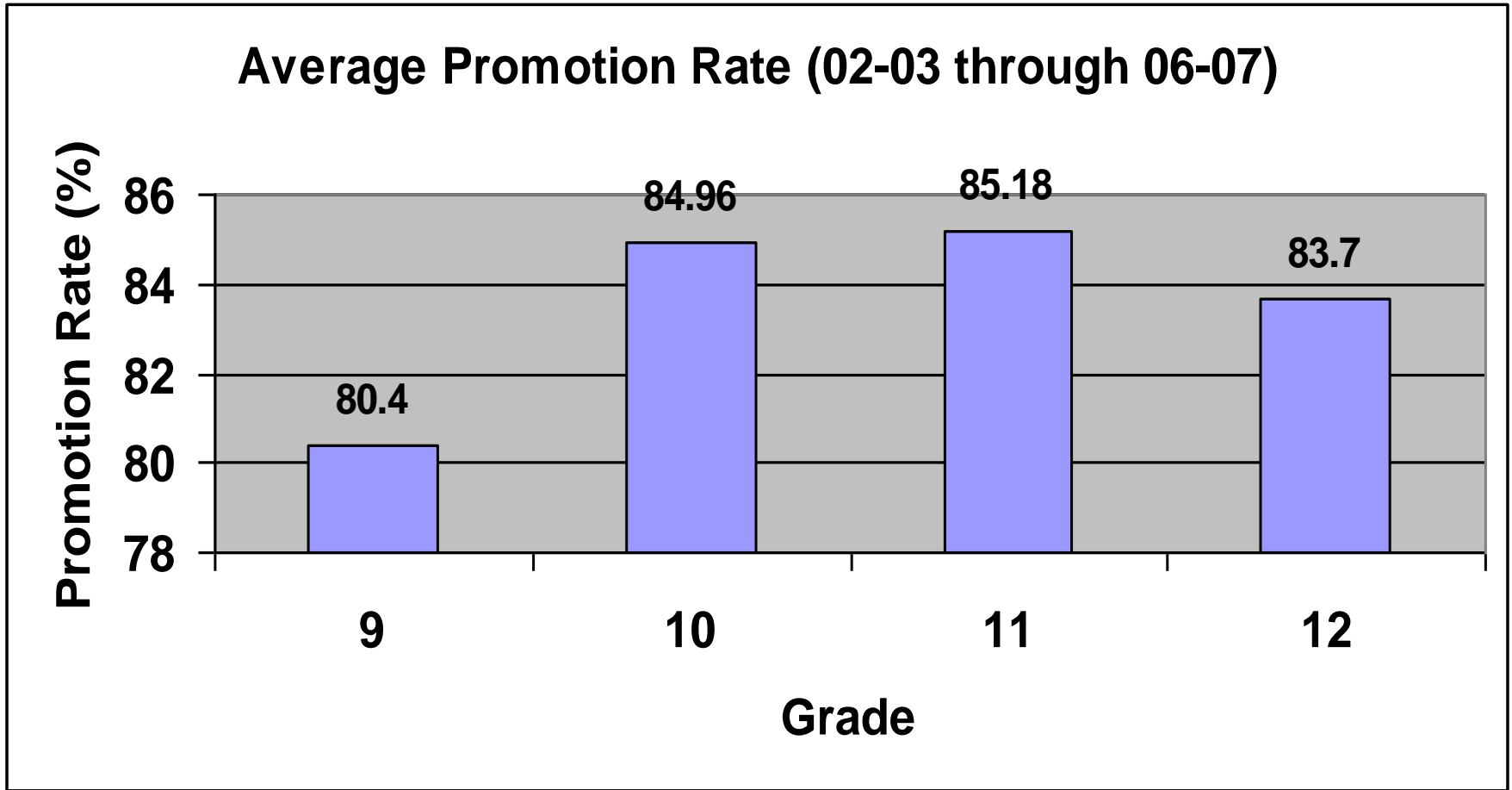
- **Success in 9th grade sets students up for the rest of high school**
 - 60% of high-school dropouts failed at least 25% of 9th grade courses¹
- **9th grade attendance predicts graduation rate²**
 - 0-4 absences/semester = 87% graduation rate
 - 25-29 absences = 5% graduation rate

¹<http://www.principalspartnership.com/ninthgrade.pdf>

²http://www.mdrc.org/area_fact_35.html



DC data: promotion rates



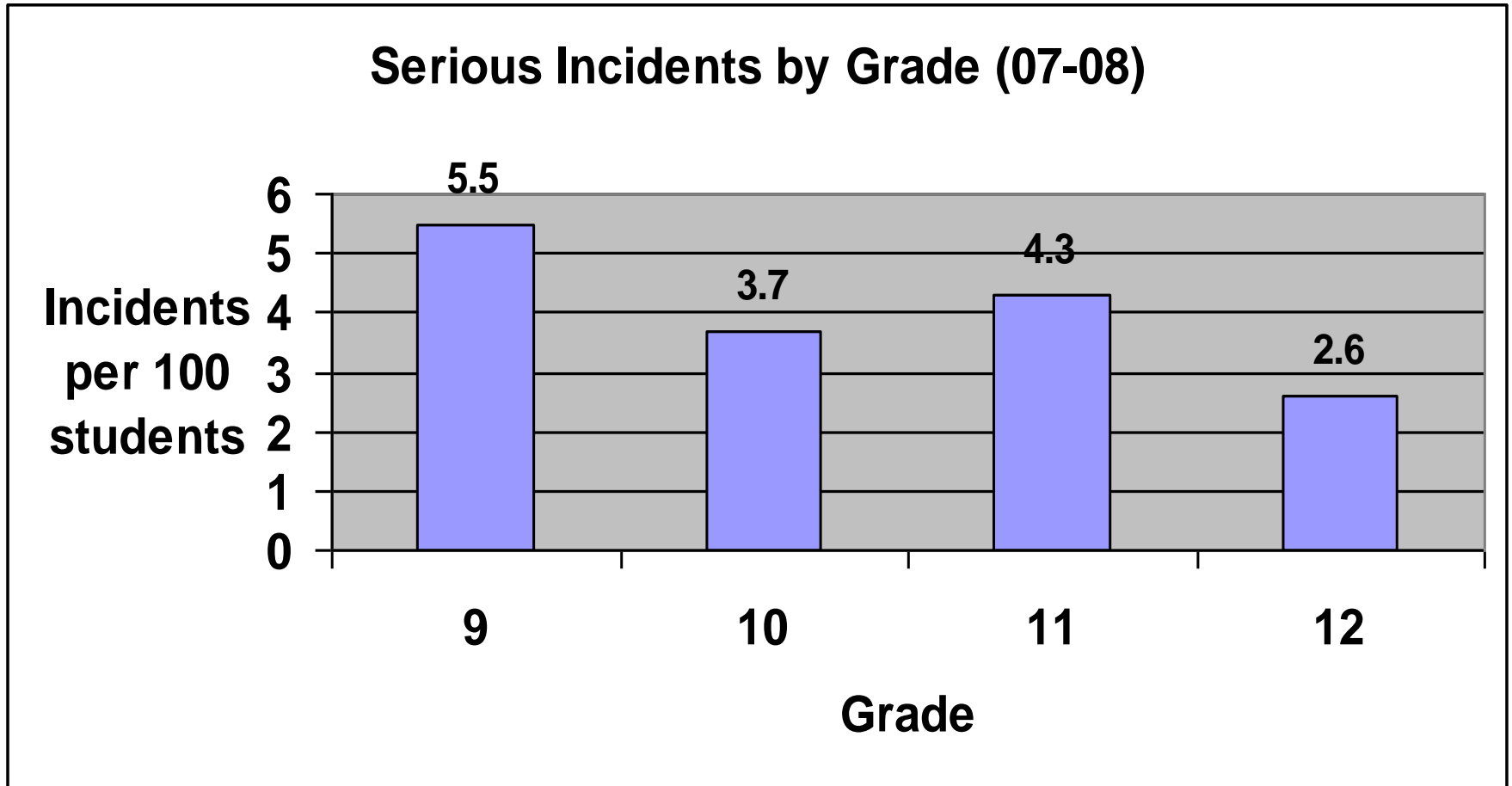


What makes 9th grade hard?

- Academic
 - Tougher classes
 - New schedule
- Social
 - Larger school
 - Oldest to youngest



DC data: behavior incidents





How do 9th grade academies help?

- Provide a smaller environment
- Consistent, specialized teachers
- Allow for communication among teachers
- “Isolate” the issues: Tackle new academics within a limited social environment



How do 9th grade academies work?

- **Summer Transition**
 - Study skills; leadership skills
 - Orientation
- **School Year**
 - Continue extra support
 - Dedicated space, classes, and teachers
 - Designated counselor and administrator
 - Options: 9th grade “teams;” non-class schedule



9th Grade SLC: Outstanding Questions

- What about students who repeat 9th grade?
 - Integrate into 9th grade
 - Repeat cohort within academy
 - Separate repeat classes
- Can we do this within the given budget/space limitations?
 - Starting with 9th grade will set precedent
 - Space should not be an issue
- Does this just delay the “shock?”
 - Consensus is no. 10th graders have one more year of maturity and have already confronted harder courses